

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of Michigan

United States of America

v.

Anthony Alessi

Case: 2:20-mj-30063

Assigned To : Unassigned

Assign. Date : 2/10/2020

Description: SEALED MATTER (LH)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of January 2017 through August 2017 in the county of Macomb in the
Eastern District of Michigan, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

18 U.S.C. § 1341

18 U.S.C. § 1343

18 U.S.C. § 1349

Offense Description

Mail Fraud

Wire Fraud

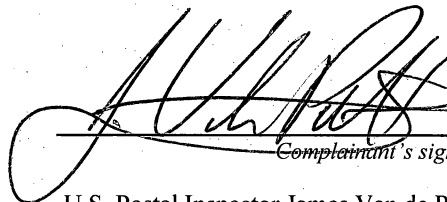
Conspiracy to Commit Mail and Wire Fraud

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

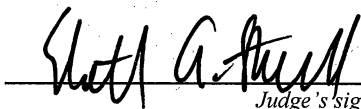
See attached affidavit.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: **FEB 10 2019**City and state: Detroit, MI

Complainant's signature

U.S. Postal Inspector James Van de Putte

Printed name and title

Judge's signature

Elizabeth A. Stafford

ELIZABETH A. STAFFORD

UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Printed name and title

Affidavit of U.S. Postal Inspector James Van de Putte

I, Postal Inspector James Van de Putte, hereafter referred to as AFFIANT, being duly sworn on oath, state as follows;

1. AFFIANT has been employed as a Postal Inspector with the Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) since July of 2014 and is assigned to the U.S., Detroit Division. Prior to receiving this position, AFFIANT completed a twelve week training academy where investigative techniques were taught and developed. In addition to the training mentioned above, AFFIANT has completed approximately 100 hours of training related to fraud, identity theft, and money laundering through the USPIS, other law enforcement agencies, and training organizations. AFFIANT has been the lead investigative agent on approximately five fraud investigations. AFFIANT has also participated in numerous investigations and search warrants involving mail fraud, wire fraud, money laundering, and identity theft led by other federal and local law enforcement officers.
2. I make this affidavit based on my training and experience, records obtained during this investigation, information from other law enforcement officers, personal observations, and interviews in which I participated.

PURPOSE OF AFFIDAVIT

3. This affidavit is made in support of a criminal complaint alleging violations of 18 U.S.C. § 1341, Mail Fraud; 18 U.S.C. § 1343, Wire Fraud; and 18 U.S.C. § 1349, Conspiracy to Commit Mail and Wire Fraud, by ANTHONY ALESSI. It does not set forth all facts known to me in this investigation.

BACKGROUND OF ASURION

4. Asurion is a cellular device insurance company that replaces damaged or broken cellular devices. Asurion accepts claims via telephone or through its website. Asurion processes all claims through its claims management system server located in Nashville, TN.

According to Asurion the claimant pays a deductible then provides a tracking number through the U.S. Postal Service, FedEx, or UPS indicating the claimant has shipped the broken or damaged device back to Asurion. Using this information Asurion sends a new device to the claimant via UPS or FedEx. Asurion can determine a claim to be fraudulent when either no package is received from the claimant or the claimant sends a shipment containing materials other than a broken or damaged device. In many such cases, Asurion has shipped multiple replacement phones as a result of an initial fraudulent claim if the claimant reports a replacement phone is damaged or non-operational.

BACKGROUND OF INVESTIGATION

5. In November of 2017, AFFIANT began an investigation related to claims Asurion determined to be fraudulent. Using information from Asurion, investigators learned an Internet Protocol (IP) address associated with 25XXX Cole St., Roseville, Michigan (the "Cole Street address") was used to file fraudulent claims, and that the deductible for a number of claims associated with the Cole Street address were paid for using pre-paid Vanilla One gift cards. As described below, the Cole Street address is a residence associated with ALESSI.

PHONE NUMBER 313-XXX-XX20 ASSOCIATED WITH ALESSI

6. Facebook records show that ALESSI verified his Facebook account with the phone number 313-XXX-XX20 on June 17, 2016.
7. A Roseville, MI Police Department report shows that police responded to a noise disturbance complaint at the Cole Street address on November 1, 2016. ALESSI gave his phone number as 313-XXX-XX20 to the police officer. ALESSI received a citation for noise nuisance since ALESSI was the lessee of the house.
8. A Roseville, MI Police Department report dated July 19, 2018 shows that police responded to a larceny complaint lodged by ALESSI at the Cole Street address. ALESSI gave his phone number as 313-XXX-XX20 to the police officer.

CLAIMS RELATED TO IP ADDRESS

9. According to the information provided by Asurion, at least 10 fraudulent claims were filed between June 19, 2017 and August 21, 2017, with associated web-based activity related to Internet Protocol Address (IP) 73.18.132.157 (IP ADDRESS). Using internet databases, investigators determined the IP address to be issued by Comcast. On or about December 5, 2017, FBI SA Horwath received information from Comcast showing the IP address assigned to a person with the initials J.T. at the Cole Street address, using the phone number 248-XXX-XX47.. A search of law enforcement databases confirmed J.T. lived at the Cole Street address at the time of the fraudulent claims. The claims associated with the IP ADDRESS and J.T. are detailed below:

- a. On or about July 8, 2017, fraudulent claim 432502673 was submitted by an individual using a name with the initials C.T. claiming his device was "Smashed." Between July 9, 2017 and July 12, 2017, documentation provided by Asurion indicated the IP ADDRESS was used in web-based activity related to the claim. Documentation provided by Asurion indicates that Asurion shipped three replacement phones as a result of this fraudulent claim. The subscriber address was given as 16XXX Braile St., Detroit, MI 48219. The shipping address was given as 20XXX Schoenherr St., Detroit, MI 48205.
- b. On or about July 23, 2017, fraudulent claim 432829266 was filed by an individual using a name with the initials X.I., for an unknown reason. According to documentation provided by Asurion, between July 26, 2017 and July 27, 2017, the IP ADDRESS was used in web-based activity related to the fraudulent claim. The claim resulted in one replacement device being shipped. The subscriber address for the plan was 57XX Bishop St., Detroit, MI. The shipping address was 15XXX Winston St., Redford, MI.

- c. On or about August 2, 2017, fraudulent claim 433076750 was filed by an individual using a name with the initials C.H., claiming his device was “dropped while working on a machine at work.” Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that on or about August 2, 2017, the IP ADDRESS had web-based activity related to the fraudulent claim. According to documentation provided by Asurion, two replacement devices were shipped based on the fraudulent claim. The subscriber address was 82XX0 Esper St., Detroit 48204. The phones were shipped to 16XXX Wildemere St., Detroit, MI 48221. The first replacement device was purported to have “Technical-power/charging” issues.
- d. On or about August 2, 2017, fraudulent claim 433076435 was filed by an individual using a name with the initials D.B., claiming his device dropped to the ground while “Playing tennis.” Documentation provided by Asurion indicated three replacement devices were shipped due to this fraudulent claim. Documentation provided by Asurion indicated web-based interaction related to this claim from the IP ADDRESS between August 5, 2017 and August 6, 2017. The subscriber address for the plan was 2XX Hampton Dr. APT 13, Venice, CA 90291. The replacement devices were shipped to 20XXX Moross Rd., Detroit, MI 48224.
- e. On or about August 7, 2017 fraudulent claim 433192831 was filed by an individual using a name with the initials C.S. claiming his device was “Dropped while jogging.” Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that on or about August 11, 2017, the IP ADDRESS was used in connection to the fraudulent claim. One replacement device was shipped as a result of this claim. The subscriber address for the plan was 19XX Mason St., NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49504. The shipping address was 11XXX Roxbury St., Detroit, MI 48224.

- f. On or about August 12, 2017, fraudulent claim 433335481 was filed by an individual using a name with the initials D.B. claiming their device was "Dropped while playing basketball." Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that between August 13, 2017 and August 17, 2017, the IP address was used for web-based activity related to the fraudulent claim. The claimant received two replacement phones as part of this fraudulent claim. The subscriber address for the plan was 2XX Hampton Dr., Venice, CA 90291. The fraudulently obtained replacement phones were shipped to 20XXX Moross Rd., Detroit, MI 48224.
- g. On or about August 25, 2017, fraudulent claim 433636095 was filed by an individual using a name with the initials R.B. claiming the individual was "Playing with my daughter and dropped my device." Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that on or about August 23, 2017, the IP ADDRESS was associated with web-based activity related to the fraudulent claim. Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that two replacement phones were shipped in relation to this fraudulent claim. The shipment address was 25XXX Maritime Circle South, Harrison Township, MI 48045. The second replacement device was shipped because the initial device was reported to have "Technical-Charging/Power" issues.
- h. On or about August 30, 2017, fraudulent claim 433734480 was filed by an individual using the initials R.B. claiming the individual was "Playing with kids and dropped device." Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that on or about September 1, 2017, the IP ADDRESS was associated with web-based activity related to the fraudulent claim. Asurion confirmed two replacement devices were shipped in relation to this fraudulent claim. The shipment address was 25XXX Maritime Circle South, Harrison Township, MI 48045. The second replacement device was sent due to the initial replacement device being "Damaged upon

receipt.” Asurion received a call from the phone number 313-XXX-XX20 in connection to this fraudulent claim. This phone number is associated with ALESSI as described in paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and 12 of this affidavit.

- i. On or about August 30, 2017, fraudulent claim 433733250 was filed by an individual using a name with the initials A.B. because his device was “Dropped while getting out of my car.” Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that between September 1, 2017 and September 4, 2017, there was web-based interaction from the IP ADDRESS related to the fraudulent claim. Documentation provided by Asurion indicated the claimant’s address received three replacement devices through the fraudulent claim. The subscriber address was 29XXX Hillview, Roseville, MI 48066. The fraudulent devices were shipped to 31XXX Marilyn Dr., Warren, MI. Asurion received a call from the phone number 313-XXX-XX20 in connection to this fraudulent claim.
- j. On or about September 3, 2017, fraudulent claim 433823105 was filed by an individual using a name with the initials P.B. because his or her device was “Lost at a festival.” Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that on or about September 3, 2017, the IP ADDRESS was associated with web-based activity related to the fraudulent claim. One replacement device was shipped as a result of this claim. The shipment address for the replacement device was 204XX McCormick St., Detroit, MI 48224.

CLAIMS SHIPPED TO THE COLE STREET ADDRESS

10. Using information from Asurion, investigators discovered at least four fraudulent claims shipped directly to the Cole Street address. The claims are as follows:

- a. On or about January 26, 2017, and individual purporting to be J.T. filed fraudulent claim 429346611 because his device was “Damaged-At work.” Information provided by Asurion indicated two phones were shipped to the

claimant as a result of this fraudulent claim. The subscriber address given for the plan was in Fostoria, MI. The phones were shipped to the Cole Street address in J.T.'s name via UPS and FedEx. The reason given for receiving a second replacement device was the initial replacement device was "Damaged upon receipt."

- b. On or about August 2, 2017, an individual using a name with the initials L.W. filed fraudulent claim 433079071 because he or she "Dropped their device playing with the kids." The subscriber address was 88XX Mansfield St., Detroit, MI. According to documentation provided by Asurion, the claim was fraudulent and two devices were shipped to the Cole Street address. The initial replacement device was purported to be "Damaged upon receipt." Asurion received a call from the phone number 313-XXX-XX20 in connection with this fraudulent claim.
- c. Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that on or about August 7, 2017, an individual using a name with the initials L.W. filed fraudulent claim 433192766 due to the insured device being "dropped on machine at work." The subscriber address was 8887 Mansfield St., Detroit, MI 48235. Asurion shipped two replacement devices to the Cole Street address. The initial replacement device was purported to have an "Activation/ESN issue." Asurion received a call from the phone number 313-XXX-XX20 in connection with this fraudulent claim.
- d. On or about May 1, 2018 fraudulent claim 57587765 was filed by an individual using a name with the initials J. H. The subscriber address was 80XX Harbour Dr., Ira, MI 48203. A replacement device was shipped to the Cole Street address.

FURNITURE PURCHASED FOR THE COLE STREET ADDRESS

- 11. In March 2018, investigators received information from Incomm, a company that manufactures and distributes One Vanilla gift cards. Upon reviewing the information, investigators learned that on or about December 1, 2017, at least five pre-paid One

Vanilla gift cards were used in the purchase of furniture from Gardner White, a Michigan based furniture retail company.

12. On or about July 5, 2018, investigators received information from Gardner White Furniture. According to the information, on or about December 1, 2017, Gardner White Furniture sold furniture to ALESSI. ALESSI provided the following contact information:

- a. Address: 25XXX Cole St., Roseville, MI 48066 (the Cole Street address);
- b. Home Phone: 313-XXX-XX20
- c. Cell Phone: 586-XXX-XX87

13. According to the information provided by Gardner White, the furniture was delivered to the Cole Street address on December 2, 2017. The payment method for the furniture was made, in part, with multiple One Vanilla pre-paid Visa gift cards 4941607XXXXX4705, 49416011XXXXX2468, 4941607XXXXX8830, 4941607XXXXX1279, 4941609XXXXX6481, and One Vanilla Master Card VGC pre-paid gift card 516488XXXXX6399.

14. Between August 22 and September 25, 2017, Asurion received at least six fraudulent claims related to the same pre-paid gift cards used at Gardner White. Each card was used to make a \$199.00 deductible payment to Asurion. Each claim was made by a different purported claimant with a different subscriber address, and each shipment of a replacement phone was sent to a different address.

SHIPMENTS SENT TO J.T.

15. According to information provided by Asurion, there were at least three fraudulent claims filed using J.T.'s name. A search of law enforcement databases confirmed J.T. lived at the Cole Street address during the time period of the fraudulent claims. The fraudulent claims are outlined below:

- a. As described above, on or about January 26, 2017, an individual purporting to be J.T. filed fraudulent claim 429346611. Asurion shipped two replacement phones as a result of this fraudulent claim to the Cole Street address in J.T.'s name using UPS and FedEx.
- b. On or about August 19, 2017, an individual using J.T.'s name enrolled in a plan with Asurion. On or about August 21 2017, fraudulent claim 433536988 was filed with Asurion. Documentation provided by Asurion indicated that two replacement phones were shipped by Asurion through this fraudulent claim. The fraudulent claim was shipped to 29285 Hillview St., Roseville, Michigan via UPS.
- c. On or about August 19, 2017, an individual using J.T.'s name enrolled in a plan with Asurion. On or about August 26, 2017, an individual purporting to be J.T. filed fraudulent claim 433657847 because his device was "Dropped on a weight at the gym and the screen shattered." Documentation provided by Asurion indicated Asurion shipped three replacement phones as a result of this claim. The shipment address was 29825 Hillview St., Roseville, MI 48066. The phones were shipped via UPS. The second replacement device was sent due to the initial phone being "Damaged upon receipt." The third replacement device was sent due to the first replacement phone having "Technical-Charging" issues. Asurion received a call from the phone number 313-XXX-XX20 in connection to this fraudulent claim.

INFORMATION FROM COOPERATING WITNESS-1

16. On March 15, 2019, AFFIANT and FBI SA Horwath made telephonic contact with COOPERATING WITNESS-1 (CW-1). The identity of CW-1 is known to AFFIANT. CW-1 was an associate of ALESSI, assisted ALESSI in submitting fraudulent claims to Asurion, and was frequently inside the Cole Street address during the time period the

aforementioned fraudulent claims were placed. CW-1 stated CW-1 would talk to investigators concerning his role in the fraudulent transactions.

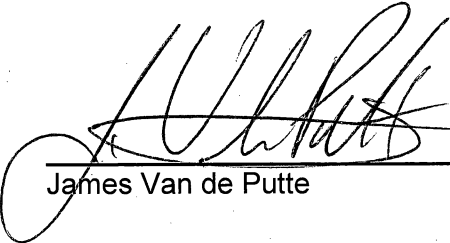
17. In July 2019, CW-1 spoke with AFFIANT and SA Horwath in person. CW-1 stated CW-1 knew the current resident of the Cole Street address to be ALESSI. CW-1 stated CW-1 was frequently inside the Cole Street address during an approximately 18 month-period.
18. CW-1 stated ALESSI became involved in the fraudulent cell phone scam through a group of individuals called the "All State Gang." CW-1 stated ALESSI started conducting fraudulent claims from the Cole Street address. CW-1 stated CW-1 has personal knowledge that at least one person assisted ALESSI in filing fraudulent claims by making telephone calls to Asurion. CW-1 also stated that ALESSI would provide cash for the purchase of pre-paid gift cards that were used to pay the deductible on the fraudulent insurance claims. CW-1 stated ALESSI received multiple phones from fraudulent claims at the Cole Street address. CW-1 stated ALESSI took at least one trip to California with members of All State to obtain vulnerable persons' personal identification information (PII). CW-1 stated that this PII was used to file fraudulent claims through Asurion. CW-1 stated CW saw gift cards inside the Cole Street address approximately two weeks prior to the interview.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

19. On or about May 21, 2019, AFFIANT and FBI SA Horwath attempted to interview ALESSI at the Cole Street address. Parked in the driveway of the Cole Street address was a white Dodge Challenger, Michigan license plate DLL 7453. According to law-enforcement databases the car was registered to ALESSI. Investigators were not able to contact ALESSI.
20. On or about July 11, 2019, AFFIANT conducted surveillance at the Cole Street address and noted the previously mentioned vehicle parked in the driveway.

CONCLUSION

21. Based on the aforementioned factual information, AFFIANT respectfully submits that there is probable cause to believe that ANTHONY ALESSI has committed mail fraud, wire fraud, and conspiracy in violation of 18 U.S.C §§ 1341, 1343, and 1349..
22. AFFIANT respectfully requests that a warrant be issued authorizing the arrest of ANTHONY ALESSI.


James Van de Putte

Subscribed and sworn before me
on 2-10, 2020.


ELIZABETH STAFFORD
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE